Mosman Preparatory School

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

Introduction

Our School welcomes feedback from all members of the school community and takes all complaints or concerns that may be raised seriously. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to the School, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. This definition is taken from the Australian Complaints handling standard AS 10002:2022.

Purpose and Objectives

This Policy is designed to: help us comply with this obligation; help the School community understand how to make a complaint; and inform staff, volunteers, contractors and others in the School community about how to respond to different kinds of complaints.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors at the School. Anyone, including students, parents/carers and other School community members, can use this Policy to make a complaint to the School.

Responsibilities

The Headmaster or his delegate holds responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Policy

Child Safety-Related Complaints

We have a different procedure for handling complaints about, or disclosures or allegations of:

- breaches of the Child Safety Codes of Conduct
- abuse or other harm of a current or former student by:
    - current or former staff members
    - current or former students
    - other people, while on School premises or at School events
- “Reportable Conduct” as defined in the Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW); and
- other child safety-related staff misconduct.

Refer to the “Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Involving the School or its Staff Members” subsection at the end of this Policy and Procedures.

The School’s Commitment

The School is committed to handling all complaints effectively and efficiently.

To manage complaints effectively, we have established this Policy and its Procedures in line with:

- Principle 6 of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, using the Office of Child Safety’s “Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people”
- the Australian complaints handling standard (AS 10002:2022 Guidelines for complaint management in organizations)
- the Australian Privacy Principles (APP).

Our Complaints Handling Policy allows us to effectively capture, manage and report on complaints.

We regularly analyse complaints received and their outcomes. Where deficiencies this analysis identifies deficiencies, we implement rectification action as a key part of the School’s commitment.

Making a Complaint

There is no fee associated with making a complaint.

Complaints may be made anonymously or using a pseudonym. However, if you make an anonymous complaint, we will be unable to provide you with feedback on the progress and outcome of your complaint. It may also limit our ability to fully investigate the complaint if we are unable to contact you to obtain further details.

We will support and provide practical assistance to complainants to make a complaint and throughout the complaints process.

We insist on all complainants being respectful to and cooperating with staff as a prerequisite to the management of their complaint.

Confidentiality and Privacy

The School is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of information throughout the complaints process. This includes maintaining the privacy of information relating to the person making the complaint and any person named in the complaint.

Procedures

Informal Complaints Resolution

Most issues causing concern in schools can be handled quickly and in an informal manner. We therefore ask that, where appropriate, you first raise your concern directly with the relevant staff member.

Even if the issue is resolved informally, the relevant staff member should log the complaint so that we are able to identify any systemic issues arising, and take appropriate rectification action.

How Do I Make a Formal Complaint?

If you have been unable to resolve a matter informally, or if you otherwise wish to make a formal complaint, you can do so in the following ways:

sending an email or writing a letter addressed to the **Mosman Prep Executive**

All formal complaints are logged through CompliSpace Assurance.

Our Internal Complaints Handling Process

The following process is a guide only and may be varied by the School as circumstances require:

1. When a complaint that is not about the Headmaster or a School Council member is logged, it is screened by a Executive Team. Complaints about the Headmaster or a School Council member will be properly investigated but they may be dealt with by someone other than a Executive Team.
2. All complaints, except those made anonymously, are acknowledged in writing, as soon as practicable, and allocated a status, a priority and a target resolution date. It is our policy, where possible, to resolve all disputes within 14 working days. We will keep in regular contact with the complainant prior to the target resolution date, advising of the status of the matter and each time confirming when the next communication should be expected.
3. The Executive Team (or if the complaint is about the Headmaster or a School Council member, the person responsible for investigating the complaint) will conduct an investigation into the issues raised, following principles of procedural fairness.

The investigation may involve:

- providing an opportunity for the complainant to fully communicate the complaint in detail
- if the complaint is about a staff member, providing details of the complaint to them and seeking their response.
- accessing any other relevant information in relation to the complaint.

4. Following the investigation, if appropriate, the Executive Team (or if the complaint is about the Headmaster or a School Council member, the person who has investigated the complaint) will formulate a resolution and, unless the complaint was anonymous, provide a written response to the complainant. If the complainant accepts this response, the matter is noted as “resolved” and closed.
5. If the complainant does not accept the response, the matter will be reviewed internally by the Headmaster or the Headmaster’s delegate, who may seek additional information or submissions from the relevant parties. The Headmaster or their delegate seeks to resolve all disputes within 14 working days from the date that the review process is initiated. If the complainant accepts the Headmaster’s, or their delegate’s response, the matter is noted as “resolved” and closed. If the complaint was about the Headmaster, the Business Manager will review the matter.
6. All complaints received are entered into our Complaints Register and, where appropriate, corrective actions will be made to address any underlying processes which the complaints investigation revealed may require improvement.
7. If the matter remains unresolved, and/or the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome or the way that the complaint has been managed, the complainant may pursue external resolution alternatives.

Complaints About Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Involving the School or its Staff Members

If a complaint, disclosure or allegation is about:

- a breach of the Child Safety Codes of Conduct
- abuse or other harm of a current or former student by:
    - a current or former staff member
    - a current or former student
    - another person, while on School premises or at School event
- “Reportable Conduct” as defined in the Children’s Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)*
- “staff misconduct”*
- other child safety-related staff misconduct

the School does not follow the above procedures (although its handling of the matter may be informed by them). This is because:

- the School has legal obligations to report certain staff conduct to external authorities and to conduct investigations in a particular way; and
- there are additional confidentiality and privacy requirements involved in these kinds of matters.

We refer to these kinds of complaints as child safety-related complaints.

*“Staff misconduct” is a broad term that could include breaches of professional boundaries, codes of conduct or standards of behaviour, whereas “Reportable Conduct” is a term defined in law and includes:

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including child pornography offences, sexual touching or an offence involving child abuse material) including grooming behaviours
- any assault, ill-treatment or neglect of a child
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child (whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child).

If your child safety-related complaint involves staff misconduct or Reportable Conduct, please make your complaint to the the Headmaster, or if this person is the subject of your complaint, please notify the Director of Business Operations.

Our Complaints Handling, which is available on our public website, explains how the School handles complaints, disclosure or allegations of staff misconduct or Reportable Conduct.

Our Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff, also available on our public website, explains how the School manages other kinds of child safety-related complaints, as well as any child safety incidents or concerns that occur at the School or School events, or that involve students, Visitors or other members of the School community.

Implementation

The Headmaster or his delegate holds responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Complaint/ Complainant	A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction made to Mosman Preparatory School, related to our services or operations, or the complaints handling process itself, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected. A complaint may be made by a student, parent/carer, former student, parent/carer of a former student, member of the wider School community, strategic partner, regulator or a member of the public generally. A complaint can also be made anonymously. We refer to anyone who makes a complaint as a “complainant”. They could be a natural person, an organisation, or a representative of an organisation.

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Related Policies and Procedures

Child Safe Program

Related Forms and Documents

External Complaints Form

References

ISNSW Complaints and Whistleblowing

Policy History and Schedule

VERSION NUMBER	V14.07.26

Reviewed:

July 2024

December 2024

July 2025

February 2026

July 2026

Pages in this Section

- **How to Make a Complaint**